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REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 9, 21 and 22 have been amended. Claims 1 to 22 remain in the application.

Reconsideration and re-examination of the application, as amended, are requested.

Claims 1, 2, 9 to 11, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,236,623 to Read et al.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 3 to 8 and 12 to 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner will note that the independent claims 1, 9, 21 and 22 have been amended to include the limitation of the real time stamp being divided into a low precision portion and a high precision portion, each portion being distributed by a different messaging scheme. This limitation is included generally in claim 12 which claim has been considered to be allowable.

In as much as all of the independent claims have been amended to include this limitation it is believed that all of the claims are allowable over the prior art.

The Read et al. reference discloses a system and method for synchronizing clocks in a plurality of devices across a communication channel wherein the master control device is a controller having an internal clock that is capable of periodic communication with slave control devices to cause internal clocks with each slave control device to be essentially synchronized with the master control device's internal clock. The master control device can command and/or monitor events in each of the slave control devices. The slave control devices are controllers having internal clocks that are responsive to messages from the master control devices. The slave control devices include an interface to monitor local events and/or control external devices to cause local events to occur. By periodically interrogating and monitoring the responses of each of the slave control devices the master control device determines the transit time delays i.e. the time it takes for a message to transfer from the master control device to each slave control device. Operating in conjunction with this data the master control device can interpret and/or adjust event times reported by the event recorders to improve the relative time accuracy of the times reported by the event recorders based on clocks in the event recorders as compared to the time maintained by a clock in the master control device. Consequently, the present invention can achieve a relative time synchronization accuracy between the master and slave times. (see column 3 line 50 to column 4 line 17)

Accordingly, the prior art identified by the Examiner monitors the time delay between the master and the slave and uses a calculated time based on the delay to correct for synchronization errors. In the present invention the real time stamp is divided into at least a low precision portion and a high precision

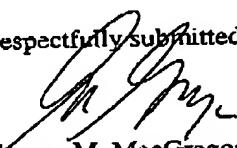
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portion is distributed to the network elements using a different messaging scheme. For example, the low precision portion is distributed using software messaging while the high precision portion is distributed by a dedicated line. In this way the real time stamp for low precision requirements i.e. year, month, day, hour, can be distributed by software messaging while more precision timing requirements down to the microseconds can be distributed using the dedicated line.

It is submitted that the prior art cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest a comparable distribution system.

In view of the foregoing it is believed that the claims at present on file and as amended herein are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and action to this end is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



George M. MacGregor, Reg. No. 37,547
Marks & Clerk
P.O. Box 957, Station B
280 Slater Street, Suite 1800
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1P 5S7

Telephone No.: (613) 236.9561
Facsimile No.: (613) 230-8821